

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KAMPAL 02223 091751Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P 091415Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY KAMPALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2822

C O N F I D E N T I A L KAMPALA 2223

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC PFOR UG US

SUBJECT: DETENTION OF PCV'S AT ENTEBBE

REF: KAMPALA 2193

1. NOW THAT I HAVE SOME TIME I WISH TO REPORT SOME ADDITIONAL
DETAIL REGARDING EPISODE REPORTED IN PARA EIGHT OF REFTEL,
PARTLY BECAUSE IT BELONGS IN THE RECORD AND PARTLY BECAUSE IT
INDICATES THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO OPERATE
HERE.

2. ON SATURDAY, JULY 7, SHORTLY BEFORE EIGHT P.M., I WENT TO
THE VIP LOUNGE AT ENTEBBE AIRPORT ONCE AGAIN SEEKING NEWS AS TO
WHETHER A CLEARANCE FOR THE PCV'S AND THE EAA PLANE TO DEPART HAD
YET ARRIVED. PRESENT ON THIS OCCASION WERE TWO OFFICERS IN
UNIFORM, A PROTOCOL-TYPE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE PRESIDENT'S
OFFICE, THE EAA REGIONAL MANAGER AND THE EAA AIRPORT MANAGER,
AND ANOTHER MAN WHO TURNED OUT TO BE AN ARMY CAPTAIN IN MUFTI.
A HALF HOUR EARLIER I HAD ENTERED THE LOUNGE AND FOUND THEM
ALL WATCHING THE TV NEWS IN LUGANDA. I DEPARTED AFTER ASKING
IF THERE WAS ANY NEWS AND RECEIVING A SHAKE OF THE HEAD IN REPLY.

3. ON THE LATER VISIT, SHORTLY BEFORE EIGHT, MY INQUIRY FOR
NEWS WAS ANSWERED THAT ORDERS HAD BEEN RECEIVED THAT THE PLANE
SHOULD STAY ON THE GROUND AND THE PCV'S IN THE TRANSIT LOUNGE
INDEFINITELY. I INQUIRED AS TO WHOM THE ORDERS HAD COME FROM
AND THE RESPONSE WAS "NEVER MIND." I THEN PROTESTED THAT THERE
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PAGE 02 KAMPAL 02223 091751Z

WAS ABSOLUTELY NO JUSTIFICATION FOR KEEPING THESE VERY TIRED

KIDS HERE AT ENTEBBE, THEY AND THEIR BAGGAGE HAD BEEN THOROUGHLY SEARCHED, AS HAD THE PLANE, NOTHING HAD BEEN FOUND THAT RAISED ANY QUESTIONS, AND THEY OUGHT TO BE ALLOWED TO PROCEED TO ZAIRE, WHERE THEY WERE TO WORK AS PEACE CORPS TEACHERS. I APOLOGIZED FOR THE VEHEMENCE OF MY PROTEST, BUT I SAID THAT WE WERE ALL TIRED AND TENSE AND IT NOW LOOKED AS IF WE WOULD BE LIVING WITH THIS PROBLEM THROUGH THE NIGHT.

4. ONE OF THE OFFICERS PRESENT THEN STATED THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I LEFT THE AIRPORT. I SAID THAT I COULD NOT LEAVE, AS MY FIRST RESPONSIBILITY WAS TO STAY THERE AND LOOK AFTER MY 112 CITIZENS. THE MAN FROM THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE SAID THAT AS A DIPLOMAT I SHOULD NOT BE DEALING WITH THE MILITARY BUT WITH MY COUNTERPARTS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. I REPLIED THAT HE WAS PERHAPS RIGHT, BUT IT APPEARED THAT ALL THE KEY OFFICIALS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD BEEN TRAVELLING UP-COUNTRY WITH THE PRESIDENT ALL AFTERNOON AND COULD NOT BE REACHED. BESIDES, I SAID, I HAD STAYED AROUND HOPING THAT THE EXPECTED CLEARANCE FOR DEPARTURE WOULD COME THROUGH TO THEM. ONE OFFICER IN UNIFORM THEN ACCUSED ME OF "HARASSING" THEM. I SAID I HAD NOT HARASSED THEM, I HAD SIMPLY INQUIRED ONCE OR TWICE AN HOUR IF THERE WAS ANY NEWS. HE SAID I HAD NO BUSINESS BEING AT THE AIRPORT.

5. AT ABOUT THIS POINT THE CAPTAIN IN MUFTI SPOKE IN AN ANGRY TONE TO THE TWO UNIFORMED OFFICERS IN A LOCAL LANGUAGE I COULD NOT IDENTIFY OR UNDERSTAND. THEREUPON THE EAA REGIONAL MANAGER STATED, WITH SPECIAL STRESS ON MY TITLE (I SUPPOSE TO IMPRESS UPON THE CAPTAIN IN MUFTI THAT I WAS A DIPLOMAT): "MR. CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, YOUR PRESENCE HERE IS ONLY MAKING MATTERS WORSE. I THINK YOU SHOULD NOW LEAVE THE AIRPORT AND LET US HANDLE THIS BY OURSELVES. I THINK WE WOULD HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF SUCCESS THAT WAY." I AGREED PERHAPS HE WAS RIGHT, BUT I STILL HAD TO LOOK AFTER MY CITIZENS.

6. THE EAA AIRPORT MANAGER THEN ASKED ME TO STEP OUTSIDE AND WHEN WE DID SO HE STATED: "IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE YOU WILL LEAVE THE AIRPORT PREMISES AS FAST AS POSSIBLE. THAT MAN IN CIVILIAN DRESS IS A CAPTAIN OF THE SECURITY AND HE WAS THREATENING YOU. ALSO, GENERAL AMIN IS NOT PLEASED BY YOUR PRESENCE AT THE AIRPORT."

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 KAMPAL 02223 091751Z

7. WELL, I DO VALUE MY LIFE, BUT I DO NOT SCARE EASILY, AND SINCE BY THIS TIME MY MIXED IRISH-GERMAN BLOOD WAS THOROUGHLY ADRENALINIZED,

I WAS PREPARED TO GO BACK IN AND CONFRONT THE CAPTAIN IN MUFTI AND SUGGEST THAT HE WITHDRAW HIS THREAT OR ELSE I WOULD REPORT HIM TO THE GENERAL, WHO HAS ON MANY OCCASIONS DECLARED THAT ANY CIVILIAN IN UGANDA BEING HARASSED OR THREATENED BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMY OR SECURITY FORCES SHOULD REPORT THE MATTER PERSONALLY TO HIM.

BUT THE MAN IN QUESTION LOOKED QUITE CAPABLE OF MURDER, AND I REALIZED THAT A CONFRONTATION WITH THE CAPTAIN WOULD NOT ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF THE 112 DETAINED PCV'S NOR HELP THE SITUATION IN GENERAL, SO I DECIDED I HAD BEST CHANGE MY TACTICS BY ABANDONING ANY EFFORTS WITH THE MILITARY, AT LEAST THESE MILITARY, AND TO TRY TO WORK THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. SO I ASKED THE EAA AIRPORT MANAGER TO GO BACK IN AND TELL THE OFFICERS THAT HE HAD TALKED ME INTO LEAVING THE AIRPORT AND RETURNING TO KAMPALA, WHERE I WOULD TAKE THE PROBLEM UP WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. I THEN TOLD BURROWS TO STAY WITH THE PCV'S IN THE TRANSIT LOUNGE UNTIL I COULD SEND HIM A RELIEF, AND I DROVE BACK TO THE EMBASSY TO REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT (REFTEL), AND THEN TO SEEK OUT ETIANG TO TRY TO GET HIM TO INTERCEDE WITH THE GENERAL.

8. ORDINARILY I WOULD RAISE THIS MATTER WITH GENERAL AMIN, EXCEPT THAT HIS RECORD FOR PUNISHING MURDERERS IS NOT AN OUTSTANDING ONE. FOR ALL OF THE THOUSANDS IF NOT TENS OF THOUSANDS OF MURDERS WHICH HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY HIS SOLDIERS DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS THERE HAS ONLY BEEN A SINGLE INSTANCE OF PUNISHMENT-- THE RECENT EXECUTION OF A SOLDIER WHO KILLED A KENYAN AIR FORCE OFFICER LAST YEAR--AND THAT WAS ONLY BECAUSE KENYATTA READ AMIN THE RIOT ACT SO THAT HE HAD TO DO SOMETHING. THE MILITARY MEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KILLING OF THREE AMERICANS DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS HAVE NOT ONLY GONE UNPUNISHED, THEY HAVE NOT EVEN BEEN PINPOINTED. (ALI AND JUMA STILL OCCUPY IMPORTANT COMMAND POSITIONS.) SO I THINK I'LL JUST FORGET IT AND NOT RISK HAVING THAT OFFICER LOOK ME UP SOME DARK NIGHT.

KEELEY

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